



Grange Farm Primary School

Absconding Policy

Adopted by Grange Farm Primary School - September 2025

To be reviewed September 2026

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school-led activities.

Where a pupil, present at formal registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to inform member of SLT, inclusion team and main office.
- SLT member organise searches of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
- If the pupil is not found then all available staff complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- School office to phone the police when the area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
- School office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.
- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff who leave school grounds to take mobile phones to contact the school.
- Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- A written report will be filed on the incident.
- Member of SLT to brief police and parents.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

1. Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school. Staff member try to alert other staff to the situation so that they may assist. This assistance may include the closure/ staffing of the schools exit points, which are the main gate and back gate (if during arrival time). A member of the SLT team to be informed as soon as possible.
2. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to himself or other people then staff should adhere to the Behavior Policy with reference to holding the student, if appropriate.
3. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
4. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the school office and SLT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
5. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
6. The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact the school.
7. The school office will contact the student's parents/carers.
8. If the searching staff lose sight of the student they must contact the school office giving details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.

If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the SLT will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.

If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.

Upon their return to school, and when the student is calm, the student must be seen by the SLT so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions. A written report will be filed on the incident.

Appendix A - Actions for absconding/missing child

1. Child is missing

Verify with the person collecting/dropping off that they haven't gone with someone else. Whilst this happens:

- One person checks the class, cloakroom and toilets
- One person goes straight to the front gate and waits
- One person goes straight to the back gate and waits

These people are year group staff who know what the child looks like.

2. Neil/Sophie informed (begin search procedure)

Search begins with Neil/Sophie co-ordinating. They will assign people to search inside the school grounds. One member of staff remains in the classroom in case the child returns.

Area 1:

- Down toward EYFS
- Y1 outdoor area
- Behind the wall on the ramp
- Opening between Y6 and the fence
- Behind walls outside Y2/3

Area 2:

- Behind and to the sides of huts by the field
- Gardening area outside Y3
- Flat field up to back gate and including overgrown area to the right and the small hill on the right hand side.
- Air gym (including under the table tennis tables)

Area 3:

- Top pitch
- Wooded area
- Trim trail

Neil/Sophie will be at the office obtaining children's contact details, (with support of office staff). Staff available to help will go to the office and ask what is needed.

3. Search outside of school grounds (may happen at the same time as step 2)

This is to be done in pairs. Staff stationed on the gates/already assigned areas to search in the grounds to remain/keep circulating there in case the child reappears. Pairs of staff will check:

- Rein Park
- Shops opposite back gate
- Perimeter outside the school (the block)
- Route to child's house

4. Call the police

If the child has not gotten home within the time it would usually take them to walk home and no member of school staff or their parents can verify their location - call 999.

Staff to have a means of contact - radio/mobile phones (essential if going out of school)

Once the child is found - ensure all staff are accounted for/checked in with. Debrief and ensure the cause is determined.